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MEDLEY

. . . OF . . .

WEATHER LORE

. . . BY . . .

M. E. S. WRIGHT.

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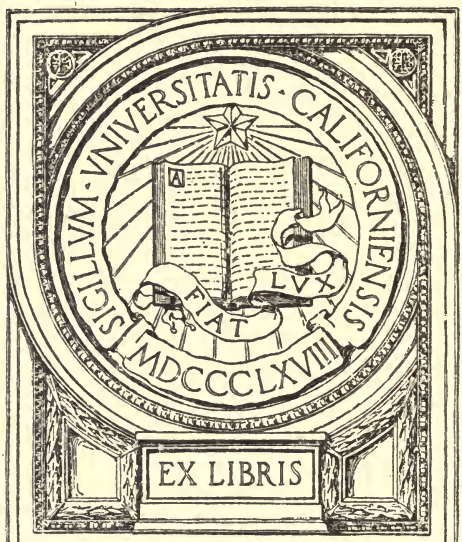
GIFT OF
MICHAEL REESE



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A MEDLEY OF WEATHER LORE

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COLLECTED BY

M. E. S. WRIGHT

"An almanack is out at twelve months day,
My legacy it doth endure for aye,
But take you notice, though 'tis but a hint,
It far exceeds some books of greater print."

THE SHEPHERD'S LEGACY.
(John Claridge, 1670)

Horace G. Commin,
Bournemouth
1913

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THE ANCHOR PRESS, LTD., TIPTREE, ESSEX.

PREFACE

In this collection of Weather Lore and Poetry I beg to acknowledge with gratitude permission from Messrs. Macmillan to quote lines from Tennyson, Charles Turner, Alfred Austin, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, T. E. Brown, and Francis Doyle.

From Messrs. Longman and Green from Jean Ingelow, from " Four Bridges," and " An Afternoon at a Parsonage." Andrew Lang, from " A Ballade of Summer." William Morris' from "The Earthly Paradise," and " Love is Enough," and Edwin Arnold, from " Bloom of an Almond Tree."

From Messrs. Kegan Paul and Trench from Lewis Morris. From Messrs. Chatto and Windus (by the courtesy of Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton) for the inclusion of verses by A. Swinburne, and from the Walter Scott Publishing Company for the use of Selections of R. W. Emerson and Owen Meredith. I have endeavoured to avoid infringing copyrights, but if I should have done so inadvertently I beg that my sincere apologies maybe accepted.

M. E. S. WRIGHT.

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A MEDLEY OF WEATHER LORE

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JANUARY

Ancient Cornish name for the month :
Mis-jenver, cold air month.

Jewel for the month : Garnet. Constancy.

If Janiveer calends be summerly gay,
'Twill be wintry weather till the calends of May.

The wind of the South will be productive of heat and fertility ; the wind of the West, of milk and fish ; the wind from the North, of cold and storm ; the wind from the East, of fruit on the trees.

Scotland.

At New Year's tide
The days lengthen a cock's stride.

Proverb in the North.

A cold January, a feverish February, a dusty March, a weeping April, a windy May, presage a good year and gay.

France.

Warwickshire countrymen to ensure good luck bow nine times to the first New Moon of the year.

A snow year, a rich year.

The blackest month of all the year
Is the month of Janiveer.

Through all the sad and weary hours
Which cold and dark and storms will bring,
We scarce believe in what we know—
That time drags on at last to Spring.

The empty pastures blind with rain.

If the grass grow in Janiveer
'Twill be the worse for 't all the year.

A fair day in winter is the mother of a storm.

Under water famine, under snow bread.

March in Janiveer,
Janiveer in March I fear.

A year of snow a year of plenty.

Spain.

Winter time for shoeing;
Peascod time for wooing.

Devon.

1565.

On Twelve-eve in Christmas, they used to set up as high as they can a sieve of oats, and in it a dozen candles set round, and in the centre one larger, all lighted. This in memory of our Saviour and His Apostles, lights of the world.

Westmeath custom.

In the South-hams of Devonshire, on the Eve of the Epiphany, the farmer attended by his workmen, with a large pitcher of cyder, goes to the orchard, and there, encircling one of the best bearing trees, they drink the following toast three several times:

"Here's to thee, old apple-tree,
Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou
mayst blow!
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow!
Hats-full, caps-full!
Bushel-bushel-sacks-full!
And my pockets full too! Huzza!"

OLD CUSTOM OF BLESSING APPLE TREES ON TWELFTH DAY.

Apple-tree, apple-tree,
Bear apples for me:
Hats full, laps full,
Sacks full, caps full:
Apple-tree, apple-tree,
Bear apples for me.

"Twelfth-Day—came in a tiffany suit, white and gold, like a queen on a frost-cake, all royal, glittering, and Epiphanous."

Elia.

January the fourteenth will be either the coldest or wettest day of the year.

Huntingdon.

ST. ANTHONY. (*January 17th.*)

It is affirmed of him that all the world bemoaned his death, for afterwards there fell no rain from heaven for three years.

ST. VINCENT. (*January 22nd. Old Style. February 3rd. New Style.*)

Remember in St. Vincent's Day
If the sun his beams display,
'Tis a token bright and clear,
That you will have a prosperous year.

Winter's thunder's summer's wonder.

ST. PAUL'S EVE. (*January 24th.*)

Winter's white shrowd doth cover all the grounde,
And Caecias blows his bitter blaste of woe ;
The ponds and pooles, and streams in ice are bounde,
And famished birds are shivering in the snowe.

Still round about the house they flitting goe,
And at the windows seek for scraps of foode
Which Charity with hand profuse doth throwe,
Right weeting that in neede of it they stoode,
For Charity is shown by working creatures goode.

The sparrowe pert, the chaffinche gay and cleane,
The redbreast welcome to the cotter's house,
The livelie blue tomtit, the oxeye greene,
The dingie dunnock, and the swart colemouse ;
The titmouse of the marsh, the nimble wrenne,
The bullfinch and the goldspink, with the king
Of birds the goldcrest. The thrush, now and then,
The blackbird, wont to whistle in the spring,
Like Christians seeke the heavenlie food Saint Paul doth bring.

Dr. Forster.

St. Paul's Day.

If Saint Paul's Day be fair and clear,
It promises then a happy year ;
But if it chance to snow or rain,
Then will be dear all sorts of grain ;
Or if the wind do blow aloft,
Great stirs will vex the world full oft ;
And if dark clouds do muff the sky,
Then foul and cattle oft will die.

T. Passenger.

Of Gardens.

For the latter part of January and February, the mezerion tree, which then blossoms; crocus vernus, both the yellow and the gray; primroses, anemones, the early tulippa, hyacinthus orientalis, chamairis, frettellaria.

Bacon.

A January spring
Is worth no thing.

Pluck broom, broom still,
Cut broom, broom kill.

Tusser.

Good gardener mine,
Make garden fine,
Set garden pease,
And beans if ye please.
Set respis and rose,
Young roots of those.
Who now sows oats
Gets gold and groats.
Who sows in May,
Gets little that way.

Tusser.

A kindly good January freezeth pot by the fire.

O Winter! wilt thou never—never go!
O Summer! but I weary for thy coming!

David Gray.

If the robin sings in the bush, then the weather will be coarse; but if the robin sings on the barn, then the weather will be warm.

Norfolk.

FEBRUARY

Ancient Cornish name:
Hu-evral, whirling month.

Jewel: Amethyst. Sincerity.

One month is past, another is begun,
Since merry bells rang out the dying year,
And buds of rarest green began to peer,
As if impatient for a warmer sun;
And though the distant hills are bleak and dun,
The virgin snowdrop, like a lambent fire,
Pierces the cold earth, with its green-streaked
spire;
And in dark woods the wandering little one
May find a primrose.

Hartley Coleridge.

Fair rising from her icy couch,
Wan herald of the floral year,
The snowdrop marks the spring's approach,

Ere yet the primrose groups appear,
Or peers the arum from its spotted veil,
Or violets scent the cold capricious gale.

Charlotte Smith.

Candlemas shined, and the winter's behind.

If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
The winter will take another flight ;
But if it should be dark and drear
Then winter is gone for another year.

When on the Purification sun hath shined,
The greater part of winter comes behind.

The badger peeps out of his hole on Candlemas Day, and if he finds snows, walks abroad ; but if he sees the sun shining, he draws back into his hole.

German saying.

On Candlemas Day if the thorns hang-a-drop,
Then you are sure of a good pea crop.

When the wind's in the East on Candlemas Day,
There it will stick till the second of May.

February fill the ditch,
Black or white we don't care which.

Hants.

All the months of the year
Fear a fair Februeer.

The dim droop of a sombre February day.

There is an old proverb,
That birds of a feather
On Saint Valentine's day
Will meet together.

1733.

Why, Valentine's a day to choose
A mistress, and our freedom lose ?
May I my reason interpose,
The question with an answer close ?
To imitate we have a mind,
And couple like the winged kind.

John Dunton.

I early rose, just at the break of day,
Before the sun had chased the stars away ;
Afield I went, amid the morning dew,

To milk my kine (for so should housewives do),
Thee first I spied, and the first swain we see.
In spite of fortune, shall our true-love be.

Gay.

SHROVE-TIDE.

Beef and bacon's out of season,
I want a pan to parch my peason.

Berks.

Knick-knock, the pan's hot,
And we are come a-shroving,
For a piece of pancake,
Or a piece of bacon,
Or a piece of truckle cheese
Of your own making.

Hants.

On Shrove Tuesday night, though the supper be fat,
Before Easter Day thou mayst fast for that.

Isle of Man.

PANCAKE BELL. (*Congleton.*)

The housekeeper goes to the huxter's shop,
And the eggs are brought home, and there's flop! flop! flop!
And there's batter, and butter, and savoury smell,
While merrily rings the Pancake Bell.

So much sun as shineth on Pancake Tuesday, the like will shine every day in Lent.

A hoar frost,
Third day crost,
The fourth lost.

Lancs.

BEAN SOWING.

One for the mouse, one for the crow,
One to rot, one to grow.

Sow peason and beans in the wane of the moone,
Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soon;
That they with the planet may rest and rise,
And flourish with bearing, most plentiful wise.

Tusser.

If February gives much snow
A fine summer it doth foreshow.

Now set for thy pot
Best herbs to be got,
For flowers go set,
All sorts ye can get.

Tusser.

In Oxfordshire the first bee seen in February is saluted, as this is said to bring good luck.

THRUSH'S SONG.

" Did he do it ? Did he do it ?
Come and see, come and see ;
Knee deep, knee deep ;
Cherry sweet, cherry sweet,
To me ! to me ! to me ! "

The pretty lark,
Climbing the welkin clear,
Chaunts with a " Cheer, here, peer,
I near my dear ! "
When stooping thence,
Seeming her fall to rue,
" Adieu," she cries,
" Adieu ! dear Love, adieu ! "

When after a rough and stormy day there is a lull in the wind at the going down of the sun, old men say: "Us shall have better weather now, for the wind's gone to sleep with the sun."

Devon.

When a moorland shepherd meets his sheep on a winter's night coming down from the hill-tops (where they prefer to sleep) he knows that a storm is brewing.

MARCH

Ancient Cornish name :
Miz-merp, horse month.

Jewel : Bloodstone. Courage and wisdom.

Upon St. David's Day
Put oats and barley in the clay.

The leeke is white and green, whereby is ment
That Britaines are both stout and eminent ;
Next to the lion and the unicorne,
The leek 's the fairest emblyn that is worne.

Harleian MS.

On the first of March
The crows begin to search,
By the first of April
They are sitting still,
By the first of May
They are a' flown away ;
Croupin' greedy back again,
Wi' October's wind and rain.

He who freely lops in March will get his lap full of fruit.

Portuguese saying.

Tossing his mane of snows in wildest eddies and tangles,
Warlike March cometh in, hoarse, with tempestuous breath.
Through all the moaning chimneys, and 'thwart all the hollows and angles,
Round the shuddering house, breathing of winter and death.

W. D. Howells.

Welcome, O March ! whose kindly days and dry
Make April ready for the throstle's song,
Thou first redresser of the winter's wrong.

W. Morris.

Of Gardens.

For March there come violets, especially the single blue, which are the earliest ; the early daffodil, the daisy, the almond tree in blossom, the peach tree in blossom, the cornelian (dog-wood) tree in blossom, sweetbrier.

Bacon.

A frosty winter, and a dusty March,
And a rain about Aperill,
And another about the Lammas time
When the corn begins to fill,
Is worth a ploughy of gold
And all her pins theretill.

Come gather the crocus-cups with me,
And dream of the summer coming;
Saffron, and purple, and snowy white,
All awake to the first bees humming.

The white is there for the maiden-heart,
And the purple is there for sorrow;
The saffron is there for the true true love,
And they'll all be dead to-morrow.

Sebastian Evans.

Beside the garden path the crocus now
Puts forth its head to woo the genial breeze,
And finds the snowdrop, hardier visitant,
Already basking in the solar ray.
Upon the brooke the water cresses float
More greenly, and the bordering reeds exalt
Higher their speary summits. Joyously,
From stone to stone, the ouzel flits along,
Startling the linnet from the hawthorn bough;

While on the elm-tree, overshadowing deep
The low-roofed cottage white, the blackbird sits
Cheerily hymning the awakened year.

Blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,
And breaks into the crocus-purple hour.

Tennyson.

Spring's an expansive time: yet I don't trust
March with its peck of dust,
Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers,
Nor even May, whose flowers
One frost may wither through the sunless hours.

C. Rossetti.

If it does not freeze on the tenth of March a fertile year may be expected.

In March is good graffing, the skilful do know,
So long as the wind in the east do not blow:
From moon being changed, till past be the prime,
For graffing and cropping is very good time.

Tusser.

In March and in April, from morning to night,
In sowing and setting good huswives delight :
To have in a garden or other like plot,
To trim up their house, and to furnish their pot.

Tusser.

To the Daffodil.

O Love-star of the unbeloved March,
When cold and shrill,
Forth flows beneath a low dim-lighted arch
The wind that beats sharp crag and barren hill,
And keeps unfilmed the lately torpid rill !

Herald and harbinger ! with thee
Begins the year's great jubilee !
Of her solemnities sublime
(A sacristan whose gusty taper
Flashes through earliest morning vapour)
Thou ring'st dark nocturns and dim prime.
Birds that have yet no heart for song
Gain strength with thee to twitter,
And, warm at last, where hollies throng,
The mirror'd sunbeams glitter.

A. De Vere.

The softest turf of English green,
With sloping walks and trees between,
And then a bed of flowers half-seen.

Here daffodils in early Spring
And violets their off'rings bring,
And sweetest birds their hymns outsing.

When country roads begin to thaw
In mottled spots of damp and dust,
And fences by the margin draw
Along the frozen crust
Their graphic silhouettes, I say,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When suddenly some shadow bird
Goes wavering beneath the gaze,
And through the hedge the moan is heard
Of kine that fain would graze
In grasses new, I smile and say,
The Spring is coming round this way.

Whitcomb Riley.

Oh, what a dawn of day!
How the March sun feels like May!
All is blue again
After last night's rain.

Browning.

No summer flowers are half so sweet
As those of early Spring.

Under the furze is hunger and cold,
Under the broom is silver and gold.

THE SPRING.

When wintry weather's all a-done,
An' brooks do sparkle in the zun,
An' naisy-builden rooks do vlee
Wi' sticks toward their elem tree ;
When birds do zing, an' we can zee
Upon the bough the buds o' spring—
Then I'm as happy as a king,
A'vield wi' health an' sunshine.

Vor then the cowslips hangin' flow'r
A-wetted in the zunny show'r,
Do grow wi' vi'lets, sweet o' smell,
Beside the wood-screen'd graegle's bell ;
Where drushes aggs, wi' sky-blue shell,
Do lie in mossy nest among
Thorns, while they do zing their zong
At evenin' in the zunsheen.

W. Barnes.

A camomile bed,—
The more it is trodden,
The more it will spread.

Thunder in spring
Cold will bring.

March search, April try,
May will prove if you live or die.

March wind and May sun
Makes clothes white and maids dun.

March does from April gain
Three days, and they're in rain,
Returned by April in's bad kind,
Three days, and they're in wind.

Sun set in a clear,
Easterly wind's near ;
Sun set in a bank,
Westerly will not lack.

Scotland.

In the morning look toward the south east;
In the evening look toward the north west.

China.

Pale moon doth rain,
Red moon doth blow,
White moon doth neither rain nor snow.

Latin proverb.

Any person neglecting to kill the first butterfly he may see for the season will have ill luck throughout the year.

Devon and Hants.

St. Patrick's Day. (*March 17th.*)

Gervase of Tilbury gives a legend that on St. Patrick's Day, to do homage to him, the fish rise from the sea, pass in procession before his altar, and then disappear.

Divination by a daffodil.

When a daffodil I see
Hanging down his head t'wards me,

Guesse I may what I must be :
First, I shall decline my head ;
Secondly, I shall be dead ;
Lastly, safely buryed.

Herrick.

Hail ! once again, that sweet strong note !
Loud on my loftiest larch,
Thou quaverest with thy mottled throat,
Brave minstrel of bleak March !

A. Austin.

March twenty-first, Spring begins.

Where the wind is at twelve o'clock on the twenty-first of March, there she'll bide for three months afterwards.

Surrey and Hants.

When the wind blows from N.E.—a uniformly dry quarter during the week of the vernal equinox—it is an all but unfailing guide to the general character of the ensuing season.

Our vernal signs the Ram begins,
Then comes the Bull, in May the Twins ;
The Crab in June, next Leo shines,
And Virgo ends the northern signs.
The Balance brings autumnal fruits,
The Scorpion stings, the Archer shoots ;
December's Goat brings wintry blast,
Aquarius rain, the Fish come last.

E. C. Brewer.

Spring is here when you can tread on nine daisies at once on the village green.

There is a saying that if boys be beaten with an elder stick it hinders their growth.

When our Lord falls in our Lady's lap
England will meet with a great mishap.

There is a tradition amongst New Forest gipsies that you must not soap your face on Good Friday, as it is said that soapsuds were thrown in Our Lord's face on the day of His Crucifixion.

Thou wilt remember one warm morn when winter
Crept aged from the earth, and spring's first breath
Blew soft from the moist hills ; the blackthorn boughs,
So dark in the bare wood, when glistening
In the sunshine were white with coming buds,
Like the bright side of a sorrow, and the banks
Had violets opening from sleep like eyes.

Browning.

If apples bloom in March,
In vain for 'um you'll sarch ;
If apples bloom in April,
Why then they'll be plentiful ;
If apples bloom in May,
You may eat 'um night and day.

From whatever quarter the wind blows on Palm Sunday, it will continue to blow for the greater part of the coming summer.

Hants.

As many days of fog in March, so many days of frost in May, on corresponding days.

Hants.

In Spring a tub of rain makes a spoonful of mud. In Autumn a spoonful of rain makes a tub of mud.

There is a tradition that twin lambs are scarce in Leap Year.

Sleep with your head to the North—you will have sickness ; to the South—long life ; to the East—health and riches ; to the West—fame.

APRIL

Ancient Cornish name :
Miz-ebrall primrose month.

Jewel for the month : Sapphire. Frees from enchantment.

If it thunders on All Fool's day
It brings good crops of grain and hay.

The first thunder of the year awakes
All the frogs and all the snakes.

MS. 250 YEARS OLD.

The first Monday in April Cain was born, and Abel was slain.

The second Monday in August Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

The thirty-first of December Judas was born, who betrayed Christ.

These are dangerous days to begin any business, fall sick, or undertake any journey.

A wet Good Friday and Easter day
Brings plenty of grass, but little good hay.

Leicester.

Parsley sown on Good Friday bears a heavier crop than that sown on any other day.

Parsley seed goes nine times to the Devil before coming up. It only comes up partially because the Devil takes his tithe of it.

Old country sayings.

Oh! faint, delicious, spring-tide violet,
Thin odour, like a key.
Turns noiselessly in memory's wards to let
A thought of sorrow free.

W. Story.

What affections the violet wakes!
What loved little islands, twice seen in their lakes,
Can the wild water-lily restore!
What landscapes I read in the primroses looks,
And what pictures of pebbled and minnowy brooks,
In the vetches that tangled their shore.

Campbell.

Descend sweet April from yon watery bow,
And, liberal, strew the ground with budding
flowers,
With leafless crocus, leaf-veiled violet,
Auricula with powdered cup, primrose
That loves to lurk below the hawthorn shade.

Graham.

Spring is strong and virtuous,
Broad—sowing, cheerful, plenteous,
Quickening underneath the mould
Grains beyond the price of gold.
So deep and large her bounties are,
That one broad, long midsummer day
Shall to the planet overpay
The ravage of a year of war.

Emerson.

In wild moor or sterile heath,
Bright with the golden furze, beneath
O'erhanging bush or shelving stone,
The little stonechat dwells alone,
Or near his brother of the whin ;

Among the foremost to begin
His pretty love-songs tinkling sound,
And rest low seated on the ground ;
Not heedless of the winding pass,
That leads him through the secret grass.

Bishop Chant.

The lark sung loud ; the music at his heart
Had called him early ; upward straight he went,
And bore in nature's quire the merriest part.

C. Turner.

HOW VIOLETS CAME BLEW.

Love on a day (wise poets tell)
Some time in wrangling spent,
Whether the Violets sho'd excell,
Or she, in sweetest scent.
But Venus having lost the day,
Poore Girles, she fell on you,
And beat ye so (as some dare say),
Her blowes did make ye blew.

Herrick.

April fourteenth, first cuckoo day.

Sussex.

In former times Shropshire labourers used to give up work for the rest of the day when they heard the first note of the cuckoo.

There is an old superstition that where one hears the cuckoo first there one will spend most of the year.

Use maketh maistry, this hath been said alway ;
But all is not alway as all men do say.
In April, the koocoo can sing her song by rote,
In June of tune she cannot sing a note :
At first koocoo, koocoo, sing still can she do ;
At last kooke, kooke, kooke, six kookes to one coo.

John Heywood, 1587.

ODE TO THE CUCKOO.

Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove !
Thou messenger of Spring !
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear ;

Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year ?

Michael Bruce.

" Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! " The first we've heard !
" Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! " God bless the bird
Scarce time to take his breath,
And now " Cuckoo ! " he saith.
Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! three cheers !
And let the welkin ring !
He has not folded wing
Since last he saw Algiers.

T. E. Brown.

April fifteenth, first swallow day.

Sussex.

He comes ! He comes ! who loves to bear
Soft sunny hours and seasons fair ;
The swallow hither comes to rest
His sable wing and snowy breast.

April and May, the keys of the year.

Spanish.

The first Sunday after Easter settles the weather for the whole Summer.

Sweden.

"The rippling smile of the April rain."

A. Austin.

A cold April
The barn will fill.

Although it rains, throw not away thy watering-pot.

Plant your 'taturs when you will,
They won't come up before April.

Wilts.

When there are many more swifts than swallows in the Spring, expect a hot and dry Summer.

April cold with dropping rain
Willows and lilacs brings again,
The whistle of returning birds,
And trumpet-lowing of the herds.

I met Queen Spring in the hanger
That slopes to the river gray ;
Yestreen the thrushes sang her,
But she came herself to-day.

Bourdillon.

When the sloe tree is as white as a sheet,
Sow your barley, whether it be dry or wet.

As yet but single,
The bluebells with the grasses mingle ;
But soon their azure will be scrolled
Upon the primrose cloth of gold.

A. Austin.

April, pride of murmuring winds of Spring,
That beneath the winnowed air,
Trap with subtle nets and sweet Flora's feet,
Flora's feet, the fleet and fair.

Belleau.

Hark ! the Hours are softly calling,
Bidding Spring arise,
To listen to the raindrops falling
From the cloudy skies,
To listen to Earth's weary voices,

Louder every day,
Bidding her no longer linger
  On her charmed way ;
But hasten to her task of beauty
Scarcely yet begun ;
By the first bright day of summer
  It should all be done.

A. A. Procter.

To The Blackbird

Golden Bill ! Golden Bill !
Lo ! the peep of day ;
All the air is cool and still,
From the elm tree on the hill,
  Chant away :
While the moon drops down the west,
Like thy mate upon her nest,
And the stars before the sun
Melt, like snow-flakes, one by one,
Let thy loud and welcome lay
  Pour along
Few notes, but strong.

Montgomery.

Fled are the frosts, and now the Fields appear
Re-clothed in fresh and verdant Diaper.
Thaw'd are the snows, and now the lusty Spring
Gives to each mead a neat enamelling.
The Palms put forth their Gemmes, and every tree
Now swaggers in her leavy gallantry.

Herrick.

Ye who have felt and seen
Spring's morning smiles and soul enlivening green,
Say, did you give the thrilling transport way?
Did your eye brighten, when young lambs at play
Leap'd o'er your path with animated pride,
Or graz'd in merry clusters by your side?

Bloomfield.

When in the Spring the gay south-west awakes,
And rapid gusts now hide, now clear, the sun,
Round each green branch a fitful glimmering shakes,

And through the lawns and flowery thickets run
(Tossed out of shadow into splendour brief)
The silver shivers of the under-leaf.

F. Doyle.

April.

Winter is so quite forced hence
And locked up underground, that ev'ry sense
Hath several objects: trees have got their heads,
The fields their coats; that now the shining meads
Do boast the paunse, lily, and the rose;
And every flower doth laugh as zephyr blows,
The seas are now more even than the land;
The rivers run as smoothed by his hand;
Only their heads are crisped by his stroke.

Ben Jonson.

Of Gardens.

In April, follow the double white violet, the wallflower, the stock-gilliflower, the cowslip, flower de liece, and lilies of all natures, rosemary flowers, the tulippa, the double peony, the pale daffodil, the French honeysuckle, the

cherry-tree in blossom, the damascene, the plum trees in blossom, the whitethorn in leaf, the lilac tree.

Bacon.

The Primrose.

Lady of the Springe,
The lovely flower that first doth show her face ;
Whose worthy prayse the pretty byrds do syng,
Whose presence sweet the wynter's cold doth chase.

Almond Blossom.

Blossom of the almond trees,
April's gift to April's bees,
Birthday ornament of spring,
Flora's fairest daughterling ;
Coming when no flowerets dare
Trust the cruel outer air ;
When the royal kingcup bold
Dares not don his throat of gold ;
And the sturdy blackthorn spray
Keeps his silver for the May ;

Coming when no flowerets would
Save thy lowly sisterhood ;
Early violets, blue and white,
Dying for their love of light.

Edwin Arnold.

There is a rapturous movement, a green growing,
Among the hills and valleys once again,
And silent rivers of delight are flowing
Into the hearts of men.
There is a purple weaving on the heather,
Night drops down starry gold upon the furze,
Wild rivers and wild birds sing songs together,
Dead Nature breathes and stirs.

Trench.

April ! the hawthorn and the eglantine,
Purple woodbine,
Streak'd pink, and lily cup and rose,
And thyme and marjorum are spreading,
Where thou art treading,
And their sweet eyes for thee unclose.

The little nightingale sits singing aye
On leafy spray,
And in her fitful strain doth run

A thousand and a thousand changes,
With voice that ranges
Through every sweet division.

Belleau.

The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,
The street-musicians of the Heavenly City,
The birds, who make sweet music for us all,
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.
The thrush that carols at the dawn of day,
From the green steeples of the piny woods,
Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng
That dwell in nests and have the gift of song.

Longfellow.

The lark, that shuns on lofty boughs to build
Her humble nest, lies silent in the field ;
But if (the promise of a cloudless day)
Aurora, smiling, bids her rise and play,
Then straight she shows 'twas not for want of voice,
Or power to climb, she made so low a choice ;
Singing she mounts ; her airy wings are stretched
Towards heaven, as if from heaven her voice she fetched.

Waller.

LARK'S SONG. (*Wessex.*)

"Twighee, twighee! There's not a shoemaker
in all the world can make a shoe for me."
"Why so? Why so?" "Because my heel's
as long as my toe."

Sweet April, smiling through her tears,
Shakes raindrops from her hair and disappears.

MAY

Ancient Cornish name:
Miz-me, flowery month.

Jewel for the month: Emerald. Discovers false friends.

Lo, the young month comes, all smiling, up this way.

The Irish say that fire and salt are the two most sacred things given to man, and if you give them away on May Day you give away your luck for the year.

The fair maid, who, the first of May,
Goes to the fields at break of day,
And washes in dew from the hawthorn tree,
Will ever after handsome be.

It is unlucky to go on the water the first Monday in May.

Irish saying.

Whoever is ill in the month of May,
For the rest of the year will be healthy and gay.

Leave cropping from May
To Michaelmas Day.

The last year's leaf, its time is brief
Upon the beechen spray ;
The green bud springs, the young bird sings,
Old leaf, make room for May :
Begone, fly away,
Make room for May.

Oh, green bud, smile on me awhile ;
Oh, young bird, let me stay :
What joy have we, old leaf, in thee ?
Make room, make room for May :
Begone, fly away,
Make room for May.

Henry Taylor.

There are twelve months in all the year,
As I hear many say,
But the merriest month in all the year
Is the merry month of May.

They who bathe in May
Will soon be laid in clay;
They who bathe in June
Will sing another tune.

Yorkshire.

Come listen awhile to what we shall say,
Concerning the season, the month we call May;
For the flowers they are springing, and the birds they do sing,
And the baziers (auriculas) are sweet in the morning of May.

When the trees are in bloom, and the meadows are green,
The sweet smiling cowslips are plain to be seen;
The sweet ties of Nature, which we plainly do see,
For the baziers are sweet in the morning of May.

Lancashire.

Summer is near, and buttercups blow,
And sunshine glimmers aloft ;
And winds play tunes which merrily flow,
Though in melody mellow and soft ;
Then sing the song of the green spring-time,
The season of promise and bloom,
When buds have birth, and the gladdened earth
Awakes from her wintry tomb.

Hogg.

Flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.

Milton.

Of Gardens.

In May and June come pinks of all sorts, especially the blush pink ; roses of all kinds, except the musk which comes later ; honeysuckles, strawberries, bugloss, columbine, the French marigold, flos Africanus, cherry tree in fruit, ribes, figs in fruit, rasps, vine flowers, lavender in flowers, the sweet satyrian (orchis) with the white flower, herba muscaria (grape hyacinth), lilium convallium, the apple tree in blossom.

Bacon.

A lovely morn, so still, so very still,
It hardly seems a growing day of Spring,
Though all the odorous buds are blossoming,
And the small matin birds were glad and shrill
Some hours ago; but now the woodland rill
Murmurs along, the only vocal thing,
Save when the wee wren flits with stealthy wing,
And cons by fits and bits her evening trill.

Hartley Coleridge.

If you sweep the house with blossomed broom in May,
You're sure to sweep the head of the house away.

Come out of doors! 'tis Spring! 'tis May!
The trees be green, the fields be gay,
The weather warm, the winter blast
With all his train of clouds is past.

Mother of blossoms! and of all
That's fair afield from Spring to Fall,
The cuckoo, over white-waved seas,
Do come to sing in thy green trees,
And butterflies, in giddy flight,
Do gleam the most by thy gay light.

W. Barnes.

All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward: but all else of Heaven was pure
Up to the sun, and May from verge to verge.

Tennyson.

Hush! hush! the nightingale begins to sing,
And stops, as ill-contented with her note;
Then breaks from out the bush with hurried wing,
Restless and passionate. She tunes her throat,
Laments awhile in wavering trills, and then
Floods with a stream of sweetness all the glen.

Jean Ingelow.

Dark winter is waning,
Bright summer is reigning,
The world is regaining,
Its beauty in May.

The wild woods are ringing
With birds sweetly singing,
Where dewdrops are clinging
To flowret and spray.

The sunshine entrances
My heart when it dances,
And glimmers and glances,
Through greenwood so gay.
From Celtic Lyre.

OLD MAY DAY. (*May 11th.*)

On ! what a May-day—what a dear May-day !
Feel what a breeze, love,
Undulates o'er us ;
Meadow and trees, love,
Glisten before us ;
Light, in all showers,
Falls from the flowers,
Hear how they ask us ; " Come and sit down."
From Venetian. (*Burrati.*)

Old May Day is the usual time for turning out cattle into the pastures, though frequently then very bare of grass.
Hone.

The three most unpopular saints in the calender are Pancratius, Servatius, and Bonifacius, known both in Germany and Austria as

the "three icemen"; and during May 12, 13, and 14 many gardeners keep nightly watch and light outdoor fires.

Who shears his sheep before St. Gervatius' (or Servatius') Day loves more his wool than his sheep.

When the corn is over the crow's back the frost is over.

Cheshire.

Go and look at oats in May,
You will see them blown away;
Go and look again in June,
You will sing another tune.

The oak before the ash,
Prepare your summer sash;
The ash before the oak,
Prepare your summer cloak.

Dorset.

A windy May makes a fair year.

Cut thistles in May,
They grow in a day;
Cut thistles in June,
That is too soon;
Cut thistles in July,
Then they will die.

In the middle of May comes the tail of the winter.

France.

When passing o'er this streamlet,
One fragrant morn in May,
The meadows, wet with dewdrops,
Shone bright at dawn of day;
The crimson-breasted robin
Was pouring forth his lay;
The cuckoo's note of gladness
Arose from scented spray.

The mavis warbles loudly
From yonder leafy tree;
The wren now joins the chorus,
And chirps aloud with glee;
The linnet is preparing
Her cheerfulness to show,

While black-cocks greet their partners
With cooing soft and low.

From Celtic Lyre.

May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit summer nights.

Among East Coast folk there is a pretty belief, very widely held, that in May, when the sea-fowl are hatching out on the saltings, Providence checks the spring tides so that they do not rise high enough to interfere with the birds. These they call by the appropriate name of " bird tides."

The linnet's warble, sinking towards a close,
Hints to the thrush 'tis time for their repose;
The shrill-voiced thrush is heedless, and again
The monitor revives his own sweet strain;
But both will soon be mastered, and the copse
Be left as silent as the mountain-tops,
Ere some commanding star dismiss to rest
The throng of rooks, that now from twig or nest,
(After a steady flight on home-bound wings,

And a last game of mazy hoverings
Around their ancient grove) with cawing noise,
Disturb the liquid music's equipoise.

Wordsworth.

The starlings are come! and merry May,
And June, and the whitethorn and the hay,
And the violet, and then the rose, and all sweet
things are coming.

He that would live for aye
Must eat sage in May.

A dry May and a dripping June
Brings all things into tune.

Bedford.

Hawthorn bloom and elder flowers
Will fill a house with evil powers.

Warwick.

THE SIMPLERS. (*XVIIth. Century.*)

Here's pennyroyal and marigolds!
Come, buy my nettle-tops.

Here's water-cress and scurvy-grass!
Come buy my sage of virtue, ho!
Come buy my wormwood and mugwort!
Here's all fine herbs of every sort:
Here's southernwood that's very good,
Dandelion and house-leek;
Here's dragon's tongue and wood-sorrel,
With bear's-foot and horehound.

Lazy cattle wading in the water
Where the ripples dimple round the buttercups
of gold.

Whitcomb Riley.

When the dimpled water slippeth,
Full of laughter on its way,
And her wing the wagtail dippeth,
Running by the brink at play;
When the poplar leaves atremble
Turn their edges to the light,
And the far-off clouds resemble
Veils of gauze most clear and white;
And the sunbeams fall and flatter
Woodland moss and branches brown,
And the glossy finches chatter
Up and down, up and down:

Though the heart be not attending,
Having music of her own,
On the grass, through meadows wending,
It is sweet to walk alone.

Jean Ingelow.

MOONWORT.

There is a herb, some say, whose virtue's such
It in the pasture, only with a touch,
Unshods the new-shod steed.

Withers.

WOOD-PIGEON.

"Coo-pe-coo,
Me and my poor two;
Two sticks across, and a little bit of moss,
And it will do, do, do."

Notts.

The pigeon never knoweth woe,
Until abenting it doth go.

Old couplet

If you scare the flycatcher away,
No good luck with you will stay.

Somerset.

May 29th, yack-bob day.

Westmorland.

May, thou month of rosy beauty,
Month when pleasure is a duty ;
Month of maids that milk the kine,
Bosom rich, and breath divine ;
Month of bees, and month of flowers
Month of blossom-laden bowers ;
Month of little hands with daisies,
Lover's love, and poets' praises.
Oh, thou merry month complete !
May, thy very name is sweet.

Leigh Hunt.

When clamour that doves in the lindens keep
Mingles with musical flash of the weir,
Where drowned green tresses of crowsfoot creep,
Then comes in the sweet o' the year !

When big trout late in the twilight leap,
When the cuckoo clamoureth far and near,

When glittering scythes in the hayfield reap,
Then comes in the sweet o' the year!

Andrew Lang.

Oh! come quickly, show thee soon;
Come at once with all thy noon,
Manly, joyous, gipsy June.

Leigh Hunt.

JUNE

Ancient Cornish name:
Miz-epham, summer month, or head of summer.

Jewel for the month: Agate. Long life, health, and prosperity.

When the white pinks begin to appear,
Then is the time your sheep to shear.

Old Rhyme.

Over the meadow,
In sunshine and shadow,
The meadow-larks trill and the bumble-bees drone.

Whitcomb Riley.

If it raineth on the eighth of June a wet harvest men will see.

The broom having plenty of blossoms, or the walnut tree, is a sign of a fruitful year of corn.

A calm June
Puts the farmer in tune.

A dripping June
Puts all things in tune.

Come away ! The sunny hours
Woo thee far to founts and bowers !
O'er the very waters now,
In their play,
Flowers are shedding beauty's glow—
Come away !
Where the lily's tender gleam
Quivers on the glancing stream,
Come away !

All the air is filled with sound,
Soft and sultry, and profound ;
Murmurs through the shadowy grass
Lightly stray ;
Faint winds whisper as they pass :
Come away !

Where the bee's deep music swells
From the trembling foxglove bells.
Come away!

Mrs. Hemans.

Pansies! Pansies! How I love you, pansies!
Jaunty-faced, laughing-lipped, and dewy-eyed with glee.

Whitcomb Riley.

The flower beds all were liberal of delight;
Roses in heaps were there, both red and white,
Lilies angelical, and gorgeous glooms
Of wall-flowers, and blue hyacinths, and blooms,
Hanging thick clusters from light boughs; in short,
All the sweet cups to which the bees resort.

Leigh Hunt.

Oh! the rosy month of June I hail as summer's queen;
The hills and valleys sing in joy, and all the woods are green;
And streamlets flow in gladsome song, the birds are all in tune;
And Nature smiles in summer's pride, in the rosy month of June.

The sixth month of the year
Is the month of June,
When the weather's too hot to be borne,
The master doth say,
As he goes on his way,
" To-morrow my sheep shall be shorn."

Somerset.

Here the rosebuds in June and the violets are blowing,
The small birds they warble from every green bough ;
Here the pink and the lily,
And the daffadowndilly,
To adorn and perfume the sweet meadows in June ;
'Tis all before the plough the fat oxen go slow ;
But the lads and the lasses to the sheep-shearing go.

Sussex Song.

Below the hill's an ash ; below
The ash, white elder-flow'rs do blow :
Below the elder is a bed
O' robinhoods a' blushin' red ;
And there, wi' nunch es all a-spread,

The hay-meakers, wi' each a cup
O' drink, do smile to zee hold up
The rain, an' sky a-clearin'.

W. Barnes.

By fragrant gales in frolic play
The floating corn's green waves are fann'd,
And all above, broad summer day!
And all below, bright summer land.

Owen Meredith.

The sweet west wind is flying
Over the purple sea,
And the amber daylight dying
On roadway, hill, and tree;
The cattle bells are ringing
Among the slanting downs,
And children's voices flinging
Glad echoes through the towns:
"Oh, summer day! so soon away!"
The happy-hearted sigh and say:
"Sweet is thy light, and sad thy flight,
And sad the words—good-night, good-night."

The wan white clouds are trailing
Low o'er the level plain,
And the wind brings with its wailing

The chill of the coming rain ;
Fringed by the faded heather,
Wide pools of water lie,
And birds and leaves together
Whirl through the evening sky.
" Haste thee away, oh, winter day ! "
The weary-hearted weep and say :
" Sad is thy light, and slow thy flight,
And sweet the words—good-night, good-night."

'Twas one of the charmed days
When the genius of God doth flow,
The wind may alter twenty ways,
A tempest cannot blow ;
It may blow north, it still is warm ;
Or south, it still is clear ;
Or east, it smells like a clover farm ;
Or west, no thunder fear.

Emerson.

Where woodbines wander, and the wallflower
pushes its way alone ;
And where in wafts of fragrance, sweetbrier
bushes make themselves known,
With banks of violets for southern breezes to
seek and find,

And trellis'd jessamine that trembles in the summer wind.
Where clove carnations overgrow the places where they were set,
And, mist-like, in the intervening spaces creeps mignonette.

St. Barnabas Day. (*Old Style. June 21st.*)

Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.

The ignorant believe that any person fasting on Midsummer eve, and sitting in the church porch, will, at midnight, see the spirits of the persons of that parish who will die that year, come and knock at the church door, in the order and succession in which they will die.

Hone.

When mack'rel ceaseth from the seas,
John Baptist brings grass-beef and pease.

Tusser.

1570(?)

Then doth the joyfull feast of John the Baptist
take his turne,
When bonfires great with loftie flame, in every
town doe burne ;
And yong men round about with maides doe
daunce in every streete,
With garlands wroughte of motherworth, or
else with vervain sweete.

Barnaby Googe.

'Twas midsummer ;
The warm earth teemed with flowers ; the king-
cups gold,
The perfumed clover, 'mid the crested grass ;
The plantains rearing high their flowery crowns
Above the daisied coverts ; overhead,
The hawthorns, white and rosy, bent with
bloom,
The broad-fanned chestnuts spiked with frequent
flowers,
And white gold-hearted lilies on the stream.

Lewis Morris.

Old Kentish Song.

My one man, my two men,
Will mow me down the medda' ;
My three men, my four men,
Will carry away togedda' ;
My five men, my six men,
And there ain't no more,
Will mow my hay, and carry away,
And mow me down the medda'.

Soon will high midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnation break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow.

Matthew Arnold.

Signs of Rain.

The hollow winds begin to blow,
The clouds look black, the glass is low,
The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,
The spiders from their cobwebs creep,
Last night the sun went pale to bed,
The moon in halo hid her head,

The boding shepherd heaves a sigh,
For see ! a rainbow spans the sky.
The walls are damp, the ditches smell,
Clos'd is the pink ey'd pimpernel.
Hark ! how the chairs and tables crack ;
Old Betty's joints are on the rack.
Loud quack the ducks, the peacocks cry,
The distant hills are looking nigh.
How restless are the snorting swine !
The busy flies disturb the kine.
Low o'er the grass the swallow wings ;
The cricket, too, how loud it sings.
Puss on the hearth, with velvet paws,
Sits smoothing o'er her whiskered jaws.
Through the clear stream the fishes rise,
And nimbly catch the incautious flies.
The sheep are seen at early light
Cropping the meads with eager bite.
Tho' June, the air is cold and chill ;
The mellow blackbird's voice is still.
The glow-worms, numerous and bright,
Illumed the dewy dell last night.
At dusk the squalid toad was seen
Hopping, crawling, o'er the green.
The frog has lost his yellow vest,
And in a dingy suit is dress'd.
The leech disturb'd is newly risen
Quite to the summit of his prison.

The whirling winds the dust obeys,
And in the rapid eddy plays.
My dog, so altered in his taste,
Quits mutton bones on grass to feast ;
And see yon rooks, how odd their flight,
They imitate the gliding kite,
Or seem precipitate to fall,
As if they felt the piercing ball.
'Twill surely rain—I see with sorrow,
Our jaunt must be put off to-morrow.

An excuse for not accepting the invitation of a friend to make a country excursion.

Edward Jenner.

Pondweed sinks before rain.

Fir cones close for wet, open for fine weather.

Cows and sheep lie down before rain to keep a dry place to lie on.

When the clouds go up the hill,
They'll send down water to turn a mill.

Hants.

If nights three dewless there be,
'Twill rain you're sure to see.

If bees stay at home
Rain will soon come.
If they fly away
Fine will be the day.

1656.

If the down flyeth off colt's foot, dandelyon and thistles, when there is no winde, it is a sign of rain.

When a cock drinks in summer it will rain a little after.

Italy.

When sheep begin to go up the mountains, shepherds say it will be fine weather.

Sea gull, sea gull, sit on the sand ;
It's never good weather when you're on the land.

Pimpernel, pimpernel, tell me true,
Whether the weather be fine or no;
No heart can think, no tongue can tell,
The virtues of the pimpernel.

When rain causes bubbles to rise in water it falls upon, the shower will last long.

Essex.

A Saturday's rainbow, a week's rotten weather.

South Ireland.

A sunshiny shower
Never lasts half an hour.

Bedford.

When oxen do lick themselves against the hair, it betokeneth rain to follow shortly after.

Beast do take comfort in a moist Air: and it maketh them eat their meat better, and therefore sheep will get up betimes in the morning to feed against rain, and Cattle, and Deer, and Coneys will feed hard before Rain, and a Heifer

will put up his nose and snuff in the air against Rain. Worms, vermin, etc., likewise do foreshew Rain: for Earth-worms will come forth, and Moles will cast up more, and Fleas bite more against Rain.

Bacon.

To talk of the weather is nothing but folly,
For when it rains on the hill, the sun shines in the valley.

Maayres taails an' mackerel sky,
Not long wet, nor not long dry.

Berkshire.

When the wind veers against the sun,
Trust it not, for back 'twill run.

Rainbow to windward, foul falls the day;
Rainbow to leeward, damp runs away.

When sheep do huddle by tree and bush,
Bad weather is coming with wind and slush.

A rainbow at morn,
Put your hook in the corn ;
A rainbow at eve,
Put your head in the sheave.

Cornwall.

Clouds without rain in summer indicate wind.

Saturday's moon, Sunday seen
The foulest weather there ever hath been.

When the new moon comes in at midnight, or within thirty minutes before or after, the following month will be fine.

Saturday change, and Sunday full,
Is always wet, and always wull.

Northants.

If mist's in the new moon, rain in the old ;
If mist's in the old moon, rain in the new.

A fog and a small moon
Bring an easterly wind soon.

Cornwall.

If Saturday's moon
Comes once in seven years,
It comes too soon.

Full Moon.

The nearer to twelve in the afternoon, the drier the moon. The nearer to twelve in the forenoon, the wetter the moon.

Hereford.

When the moon is at the full,
Mushrooms you may freely pull;
But when the moon is on the wane,
Wait, ere you think to pluck again.

The moon and the weather
May change together;
But change of the moon
Does not change the weather;
If we'd no moon at all,
And that may seem strange,
We still should have weather
That's subject to change.

Midsummer Fairies.

The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green ;
Pansies, and those veiled nuns, meek violets,
Sighing to that warm world from which they screen ;
And golden daffodils, plucked for May's queen ;
And lovely harebells, quaking on the heath ;
And hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,
Whose tuneful voice, turned fragrance in his breath,
Kissed by sad zephyr, guilty of his death.

Hood.

The sun has long been set,
The stars are out by twos and threes,
The little birds are piping yet
Among the bushes and the trees ;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off wind that rushes,
And a sound of water that gushes,
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky,
Who would " go parading,"
In London " and masquerading,"
On such a night in June,
With the beautiful soft half-moon,

And all these innocent blisses ?
On such a night as this is !

Wordsworth.

When the wind's in the south
The rain's in its mouth.

No weather is ill
If the wind be still.

Old saying.

All through the sultry hours of June,
From morning blithe to golden noon,
And till the star of evening climbs
The gray-blue East, a world too soon,
There sings a thrush within the limes.

God's poet, hid in foliage green,
Sings endless songs, himself unseen ;
Right seldom come his silent times.
Linger, ye summer hours serene !
Sing on, dear thrush, amid the limes !

Mortimer Collins.

A wet June makes a dry September.

Cornwall.

JULY

Ancient Cornish name :
Miz-gorepham, head of the summer month.

Jewel for the month : Ruby. Discovers poison.

If the first of July be rainy weather,
'Twill rain more or less for four weeks together.

In my nostrils the summer wind
Blows the exquisite scent of the rose :
Oh ! for the golden, golden wind,
Breaking the buds as it goes !
Breaking the buds and bending the grass,
And spilling the scent of the rose.

Aldrich.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The rose as where some buried Cæsar bled ;
That every hyacinth the garden wears
Dropt in its lap from some once lovely head.

Omar Khayyam.

Of Gardens.

In July come gilliflowers of all varieties, musk roses, the lime tree in blossom, early pears, and plums in fruit, ginnetings, quadlins.

Bacon.

A tuft of evening primroses,
O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes ;
O'er which it well might take a pleasant sleep,
But that 'tis ever startled by the leap
Of buds into ripe flowers. *Keats.*

Now the glories of the year
May be viewed at the best,
And the earth doth now appear
In her fairest garments dress'd :
Sweetly smelling plants and flowers
Do perfume the garden bowers ;
Hill and valley, wood and field,
Mixed with pleasure profits yield.

George Withers.

Blue flags, yellow flags, flags all freckled,
Which will you take ? Yellow, blue, speckled !
Take which you will, speckled, blue, yellow,
Each in its way has not a fellow.

C. Rossetti.

Swelling downs, where sweet air stirs
Blue hair-bells lightly, and where prickly furze
Buds lavish gold.

Keats.

Mouse-ear, or Scorpion grass, any manner of way ministered to horses brings this help unto them, that they cannot be hurt, while the smith is shoeing of them, therefore it is called of many, *herba clavorum*, the herb of nails.

Old saying, before 1660.

Sweet is the Rose, but growes upon a brere ;
Sweet is the Junipere, but sharp his bough ;
Sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh nere ;
Sweet is the Firbloome, but his braunche is rough ;
Sweet is the Cypresse, but his rynd is tough ;
Sweet is the Nut, but bitter is his pill ;
Sweet is the Broome-flowre, but yet sowre enough ;
And sweet is Moly, but his root is ill.
So every sweet with sowre is tempered still,
That maketh it the coveted be more :
For easie things, that may be got at will,
Most sorts of men doe set but little store.

Spenser.

Where the copse-wood is the greenest,
Where the fountain glistens sheenest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
There the lady fern grows strongest.

Walter Scott.

Faire Dayes : or, Dawnes Deceitful.

Faire was the Dawne ; and but e'ene now the Skies
Shew'd like to Creame, enspir'd with Strawberries :
But on a sudden, all was chang'd and gone
That smil'd in that first sweet complexion.

Then Thunder-claps and Lightning did conspire
To teare the world, or set it all on fire.
What trust to things below, whenas we see,
As Men, the Heavens have their Hypocrisie ?

Herrick.

Summer in the penniless can stir the frozen prayer,
Summer sends a golden glow through needy bones a-while ;
Bright and breezy is the dawn, and soft the balmy air ;

Summer, 'tis the breath of Heaven, 'tis God's own gracious smile.

From Victor Hugo.

The nightingale and the cuckow both grow hoarse at the rising of Sirius the dogge star.

Not rend off, but cut off ripe bean with a knife,
For hindering stalk of her vegetive life.
So gather the lowest, and leaving the top,
Shall teach thee a trick for to double thy crop.

Tusser.

A shower of rain in July, when the corn begins to fill,
Is worth a plough of oxen, and all belongs there-till.

ST. SWITHUN. (*July 15th.*)

Saint Swithun's Day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days it will remain ;
Saint Swithun's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days 'twill rain na mair.

Scotland.

St. Swithun christens the apples.

No tempest good July,
Lest the corn look ruely.

While wormwood hath seed, get a handful or twain,
To save against March, to make flea to refrain :
Where chamber is sweepid, and wormwood is strown,
No flea for his life, dare abide to be known.

THE FLOWER GIRL.

1.

Come buy, come buy my mystic flowers,
All ranged with due consideration,
And culled in fancy's fairy bowers,
To suit each age and every station.

2.

For those who late in life would tarry,
I've snowdrops, winter's children cold ;
And those who seek for wealth to marry,
May buy the flaunting marigold.

3.

I've ragwort, ragged robins, too,
Cheap flowers for those of low condition ;
For bachelors I've buttons blue ;
And crown imperials for ambition.

4.

For sportsmen keen, who range the lea,
I've pheasant's eye and sprigs of heather;
For courtiers with the supple knee,
I've parasites and prince's feather.

5.

For thin tall fops I keep the rush,
For peasants still am nightshade weeding;
For rakes I've devil-in-the-bush,
For sighing strephons, loves-lies-bleeding.

But fairest blooms affection's hand
For constancy and worth disposes,
And gladly weaves at your command
A wreath of amaranths and roses.

Mrs. Corbold.

LONDON STREET-CALL. (*About* 200 *years old.*)

Will you buy, lady, buy
My sweet blooming lavender?
There are sixteen blue branches a penny.
You will buy it once, you will buy it twice,
It makes your clothes smell so very nice.
It will scent your pocket-handkerchief,
And it will scent your clothes as well.
Now is your time, and do not delay:

Come and buy your lavender,
All fresh cut from Mitcham every day.

I do not want change: I want the same old and loved things, the same wild flowers, the same trees and soft ash-green; the turtle doves, the blackbirds, the coloured yellow-hammer sing, sing, singing so long as there is light to cast a shadow on the dial, for such is the measure of his song, and I want them in the same place.

Richard Jefferies.

St. James's Day. (*New Style. July 25th.*)
'Till Saint James's Day be past and gone,
There may be hops, or there may be none.

Hereford.

July, to whom, the dog-star in her train,
St. James gives oisters, and St. Swithin rain.

Churchill.

Oh! golden, golden summer,
What is it thou hast done?
Thou hast chased each vernal roamer
With thy fiercely burning sun.

Glad was the cuckoo's hail.
Where may we hear it now ?
Thou hast driven the nightingale
From the waving hawthorn bough.

Thou hast shrunk the mighty river ;
Thou hast made the small brook flee ;
And the light gales faintly quiver
Through the dark and shadowy tree.

W. Howitt.

AUGUST

Ancient Cornish name:
Miz-east, harvest month.

Jewel for the month: Sardonyx. Insures happiness in marriage.

AUGUST FIRST. (*Loaf-mass Day.*)

Day of offering first fruits, when a loaf was given to the priests in place of the first fruits.

At Latter Lammas, i.e. never.

The August gold of earth.

All things rejoiced beneath the sun, the weeds,
The river, and the cornfields, and the reeds;
The willow-leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees.

Shelley.

Of Gardens.

In August come plums of all sorts in fruit, pears, apricots, berberies, filberds, musk melons, monkshoods of all colour.

Bacon.

August 1st. (*Snipe shooting may begin.*)

Snipe's song : " Don't take " local name for Snipe.

Nipcake, don't take,
Don't take, don't take ;
Gie the lasses milk and bread,
And gie the laddies don't take,
Don't take, don't take.

Scottish Midlands.

August 5th. (*Old Style.*)

St. James's Day. Oyster Day.

Who eats oysters on St. James's Day will never want.

Wheat sways heavy, oats are airy,
Barley bows a graceful head,
Short and small shoots up canary ;
Each of these is some one's bread—

Bread for man or bread for beast,
Or at very least
A bird's savoury feast.
C. Rossetti.

It is always windy in barley harvests; it blows off the heads for the poor.

On Thursday at three
Look out and you'll see
What Friday will be.

No weather is ill
If the wind be still.

For morning rain leave not your journey.

Never a fisherman med there be,
If fishes could hear as well as see.
Kent.

If the sage tree thrives and grows,
The master's *not* master, and that he knows.
Warwick.

A garden must be looked into, and dressed as a body.

To smell wild thyme will renew spirits and energy in long walks under an August sun.

Friday's a day as'll have his trick,
The fairest or foulest day o' the wick.

Dry August and warm
Doth harvest no harm.

Put in the sickles and reap,
For the morning of harvest is red,
And the long, large ranks of the corn,
Coloured and clothed as the morn,
Stand thick in the fields and deep,
For them that faint to be fed.

Swinburne.

Summer is purple, and drowsed with repletion.

Now yellow harvests wave on every field,
Now bending boughs the hoary chestnut yield,
Now loaded trees resign their annual store,
And on the ground the mellow fruitage pour.

Beattie. (*From "Virgil."*)

AUGUST 16TH. (*St. Roche's Day.*)

Formerly celebrated in England as a general Harvest Home.

Good huswives in summer will save their own seeds
Against the next year, as occasion needs ;
One seed for another to make an exchange,
With fellowly neighbourhood seemeth not strange.

Tusser.

On one side is a field of drooping oats,
Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats.

Keats.

AUGUST 24TH. (*St. Bartholomew's Day.*)

If St. Bartholomew's Day be misty, the morning beginning with a hoar frost, then cold weather will soon ensue, and a sharp winter attended with many biting frosts.

Thomas Passenger.

St. Bartlemy's mantle wipes dry
All the tears that St. Swithun can cry.

Portugal.

. . . Happy Britannia ! . . .
Rich is thy soil, and merciful thy clime ;
Thy streams unfailing in the Summer's drought ;
Unmatch'd thy guardian oaks ; thy vallies float
With golden waves ; and on thy mountains flocks
Bleat numberless ; while roving round their sides,
Bellow the blackening herds in lusty droves.
Beneath thy meadows glow, and rise unquell'd
Against the mower's scythe.

Thomson.

SEPTEMBER

Ancient Cornish name :
Miz-guerda gala, white straw month.

Jewel for the month : Chrysolite. Antidote to madness.

If the woodcock had but the partridge's thigh,
He'd be the best bird that ever did fly.
If the partridge had but the woodcock's breast,
He'd be the best bird that ever was dress'd.

Harvest Hwome.

The ground is clear. There's nar a ear
O' stannen corn a-left out now,
Vor win' to blow or rain to drow ;
'Tis all up seafe in barn or mow.
Here's health to them that plough'd an' zow'd ;
Here's health to them that reap'd an' mow'd,
An' them that had to pitch an' lwoad,
Or tip the rick at Harvest Hwome.

The happy zight,—the merry night ;
The men's delight,—the Harvest Hwome.

W. Barnes.

We have ploughed, we have sowed,
We have reaped, we have mowed,
We have brought home every load,
Hip, hip, hip, Harvest Home.

Gloucester.

Harvest Toast.

Here's a health to the barley mow,
Here's a health to the man who very well can
Both harrow and plough and sow.
When it is well sown,
See it is well mown,
Both raked and gravell'd clean,
And a barn to lay it in,
Here's a health to the man who very well can
Both thrash and fan it clean.

Suffolk.

Tramping after grouse or partridge through the
soft September air,
Both my pockets stuffed with cartridge, and
my heart devoid of care.

September blow soft.
Till the fruit's in the loft.

OF GARDENS.

In September come grapes, apples, poppies of all colours, peaches, melocotones (yellow peaches), nectarines, cornelians, wardens, quinces.

Bacon.

Spring was o'er happy and knew not the reason,
And Summer dreamed sadly, for she thought all was ended
In her fulness of wealth that might not be amended;
But this is the harvest and the garnering season,
And the leaf and the blossom in the ripe fruit are blended.

W. Morris.

A bloom upon the apple tree when the apples are ripe
Is a sure termination to somebody's life.

September dries up wells or breaks down bridges.

Portugal.

Many haws, many sloes, many cold toes.

When September thirteenth falls on a Friday, the Autumn will be dry and sunny.

France.

September fifteenth is said to be fine in six years out of seven.

Onion skin very thin,
Mild winter coming in ;
Onion skin thick and tough,
Coming winter cold and rough.

Set strawberries, wife,
I love them for life.

Tusser.

The barberry, respis, and gooseberry too,
Look now to be planted as other things do :
The gooseberry, respis, and roses all three,
With strawberries under them trimly agree.

Tusser.

Wild with the winds of September
Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with the angel.

Longfellow.

That mellow season of the year
When the hot sun singes the yellow leaves
Till they be gold, and with a broader sphere
The moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves.

Hood.

When the falling waters utter
Something mournful on their way,
And departing swallows flutter,
Taking leave of bank and brae ;
When the chaffinch idly sitteth
With her mate upon the sheaves,
And the wistful robin flitteth
Over beds of yellow leaves ;
When the clouds like ghosts that ponder
Evil fate, float by and frown,
And the listless wind doth wander
Up and down, up and down :

Through the fields and fallows wending,
It is sad to walk alone.

Jean Ingelow.

St. Matthew. (*September 21st.*)
St. Matthee shut up the bee.

The flush of the landscape is o'er,
  The brown leaves are shed on the way,
The dye of the lone mountain-flower
  Grows wan and betokens decay.

All silent the song of the thrush,
  Bewilder'd she cowers in the dale ;
The blackbird sits lone on the bush—
  The fall of the leaf they bewail.

Hogg.

Summer is gone on swallow's wings,
  And earth has buried all her flowers ;
No more the lark, the linnet sings,
  But silence sits in faded bowers.
    There is a shadow on the plain
    Of Winter, ere he comes again.

Hood.

The feathers of the willow
Are half of them grown yellow
Above the swelling stream ;
And ragged are the bushes,
And rusty now the rushes,
And wild the clouded gleam.

The thistle now is older,
His stalk begins to moulder,
His head is white as snow ;
The branches all are barer,
The linnet's song is rarer,
The robin pipeth now.

Dixon.

Nothing stirs the sunny silence,
Save the drowsy humming of the bees
Round the rich, ripe peaches on the wall,
And the south wind sighing in the trees,
And the dead leaves rustling as they fall :
While the swallows, one by one, are gathering,
All impatient to be on the wing,
And to wander from us, seeking
Their beloved Spring.

Adelaide Procter.

THE GARDEN.

What wondrous life is this I lead !
Ripe apples drop about my head.
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine.
The nectarine, and curious peach

Into my hands themselves do reach.
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Andrew Marvell.

ST. MICHAEL'S DAY. (*September 29th.*)

In the Sarum Missal St. Michael is invoked as a "most glorious and warlike prince," "chief officer of paradise," "captain of God's hosts," "the receiver of souls," "the vanquisher of evil spirits," and "the admirable general."

From Hone.

If Michaelmas Day be fair, the sun will shine much in the winter; though the wind at north-east will frequently reign long, and be very sharp and nipping.

Thomas Passenger.

Fresh herring plenty Michael brings,
With fatted crones (old ewes) and such old things.

Tusser.

When the tenants come to pay their quarter's rent,

They bring some fowl at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent,
At Christmas a capon, at Michaelmas a goose,
And somewhat else at New Year's tide, for fear their lease fly loose.

G. Gascoigne.

Geese now in their prime season are,
Which if well roasted are good fare:
Yet, however, friends take heed
How too much on them you feed,
Lest, when as your tongues run loose,
Your discourse do smell of goose.

"*Poor Robin,*" 1695.

If you eat goose on Michaelmas Day you will never want money all the year round.

OLD SAYING.

The Michaelmas moon
Rises nine nights alike soon.

The moon in the wane, gather fruit for to last;
But winter fruit gather, when Michael is past;
Though michers (thieves) that love not to buy nor to crave,
Make some gather sooner, else few for to have.

Tusser.

OCTOBER

Ancient Cornish name :
Miz-hedra, watery month.

Jewel : Opal. Hope.

October Fourth.

St. Francis and St. Benedight died 1226.

St. Francis and St. Benedight,
Blesse this house from wicked wight
From the night-mare, and the goblin
That is night Good-Fellow-Robin ;
Keep it from all evil spirits,
Fairies, weezils, rats, and ferrets :
From curfew time,
To the next prime.

William Cartwright.

Who soweth in rain
Hath weed to his pain ;
But worse shall he speed
That soweth ill seed. *Tusser.*

When Autumn, sad but sunlit, doth appear,
With his gold hand gilding the falling leaf,
Bringing up Winter to fulfil the year,
Bearing upon his back the ripened sheaf ;
When all the hills with woolly seed are white
When lightning fires and gleams do meet from far the sight ;
When the fair apple, flushed as even sky,
Doth bend the tree unto the fertile ground,
When juicy pears and berries of black dye
Do dance in air and call the eye around :
Then, be the even foul or be it fair,
Methinks my heart's delight is stained with some care.

Chatterton.

There is strange music in the stirring wind,
When lowers the autumnal eve, and all alone
To the dark wood's cold covert thou art gone,
Whose ancient trees on the rough slope reclined
Rock, and at times scatter their tresses sere.

W. L. Bowles.

Of Gardens.

In October and beginning of November come services, medlars, bullaces, roses cut or removed to come late, hollyoaks, and such like.

Bacon.

Seed-Time.

October's gold is dim—the forests rot,
The weary rain falls ceaseless, while the day
Is wrapt in damp. In mire of village way
The hedgerow leaves are stampt, and, all forgot,
The broodless nest sits visible in the thorn.
Autumn, among her drooping marigolds,
Weeps all her garnered fields and empty folds
And dripping orchards, plundered and forlorn.

David Gray.

Autumn Days.

Yellow, mellow, ripened days,
Sheltered in a golden coating;
O'er the dreamy, listless haze,
White and dainty cloudlets floating
Winking at the blushing trees,
And the sombre, furrowed fallow;
Smiling at the airy ease
Of the southward flying swallow.
Sweet and smiling are thy ways,
Beauteous, golden, Autumn days!

Shivering, quivering, tearful days,
Fretfully and sadly weeping;
Dreading still, with anxious gaze,
Icy fetters round thee creeping;
O'er the cheerless, withered plain,
Woefully and hoarsely calling;
Pelting hail and drenching rain,
On thy scanty vestments falling.
Sad and mournful are thy ways,
Grieving, wailing, Autumn days!

Will. Carleton.

Moan, oh ye autumn winds!
Summer has fled,

The flowers have closed their tender leaves and die ;
The lily's gracious head
All low must lie,
Because the gentle Summer now is dead.

Mourn, mourn, oh autumn winds,
Lament and mourn ;
How many half-blown buds must close and die ;
Hopes with the Summer born
All faded lie,
And leave us desolate and earth forlorn !

A. A. Procter.

St. Simon and St. Jude's Day. (*October 28th.*)

It is a Bedford custom for boys to cry baked pears about the town, with the following words :—

Who knows what I have got ?
In a hot pot ?
Baked Wardens—all hot !
Who knows what I have got ?

October brings the cold weather down,
When the wind and the rain continue ;
He nerves the limbs that are lazy grown,
And braces the languid sinew ;
So while we have voices and lungs to cheer,
And the winter frost before us,
Come chant to the king of the mortal year,
And thunder him out in chorus.

E. E. Bowen.

" Decay, decay," the wildering west winds cry ;
" Decay, decay," the moaning woods reply ;
The whole dead autumn landscape, drear and chill,
Strikes the same chord of desolate sadness still.

Full moon in October without frost, no frost till full moon in November.

Hoar frost and gipsies never stay nine days in a place.

There are always nineteen fine days in October.

Kentish saying.

An April frost
Is sharp, but kills not; sad October's storm
Strikes when the juices and the vital sap
Are ebbing from the leaf.

Henry Taylor.

NOVEMBER

Ancient Cornish name:
Miz-dui, black month.

Jewel for the month: Topaz. Fidelity.

NOVEMBER 1ST. (*All Saints' Day.*)

On All Saints' Day hard is the grain.
The leaves are dropping, the puddle is full,
At setting off in the morning
Woe to him that will trust a stranger.

On All Saints' Day blustering is the weather,
Unlike the beginning of the past fair season:
Besides God there is none that knows the future.

From the Welsh. 1792.

Apples, peares, hawthorns, quicksetts, oakes. Sett them at All Hallow-tyde, and command them to grow; sett them at Candlemas-tide and entreat them to grow.

Wilts.

Who sets an apple tree may live to see it end,
Who sets a pear tree may set it for a friend.

Hereford.

Their loveliness of life and leaf
At last the waving trees have shed ;
The garden ground is sown with grief,
The gay chrysanthemum is dead.

But oh ! remember this :
There must be birth and blossoming ;
Nature will waken with a kiss
Next Spring !

Clement Scott.

Thorny balls, each three in one,
The chestnuts throw in our path in showers !
For the drop of the woodland fruit's begun,
These early November hours.

Browning.

There never was a juster debt
Than what the dry do pay for wet ;
Never a debt was paid more nigh
As what the wet do pay for dry !

A wet Sunday, a fine Monday, wet the rest of the week.

Winchester.

An early winter,
A surly winter.

St. Martin's Day. (*November 11th.*)

If Martinmas ice can bear a duck,
The winter will be all mire and muck.

'Tween Martinmas and Yule,
Water's wine in every pool.

If it is cold, fair, and dry at Martinmas, the cold in winter will not last long.

Old saying.

Young and old must go warm at Martinmas.

Italy.

Weary the cloud falleth out of the sky.
Dreary the leaf lieth low,
All things must come to the earth by-and-by,
Out of which all things grow.

Owen Meredith.

The year's on the wane,
There is nothing adorning,
The night has no eve,
And the day has no morning ;
Cold winter gives warning.

Hood.

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere ;
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the withered leaves lie dead,
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrub the jay,
And from the wood-tops calls the crow, through all the gloomy day.

W. Cullen Bryant.

NOVEMBER 20TH. (*St. Edmund's Day.*)

Set garlike and pease
St. Edmund to please.

Tusser.

If on Friday it rain,
'Twill on Sunday again ;
If Friday be clear,
Have for Sunday no fear.

From twelve to two
See what the day will do.

NOVEMBER 23RD. (*St. Clement's Day.*)

Catherine and Clement, be here, be here ;
Some of your apples, and some of your beer ;
Some for Peter, and some for Paul,
And some for Him that made us all.
Clement was a good old man,
For his sake give us some ;
Not of the worst, but some of the best,
And God will send your soul to rest.

Worcestershire.

NOVEMBER 30TH. (*St. Andrew's Day.*)

On St. Andrew's the night is twice as long as the day.

Portugal.

DECEMBER

Ancient Cornish name :
Miz-kavardine, following black month.

Jewel for the month : Turquoise. Prosperity.

Though now no more the musing ear
Delights to listen to the breeze,
That lingers o'er the green-wood shade,
I love thee, Winter ! well.

Sweet are the harmonies of Spring,
Sweet is the Summer's evening gale,
And sweet the autumnal winds that shake
The many-colour'd grove.

And pleasant to the sober'd soul
The silence of the wintry scene,
When Nature shrouds herself, entranced
In deep tranquillity.

Southey.

December frost and January flood
Never boded husbandman good.

When there are three days cold, expect three days colder.

Of Gardens.

I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year, in which, severally, things of beauty may be then in season.

For December and January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter, holly, ivy, bays, juniper, cypress trees, yew, pines, fir trees, rosemary, lavender, periwinkle, the white, the purple, and the blue ; germander, flags, orange trees, lemon trees, and myrtles, if they be stoved ; and sweet marjoram, warm set.

Bacon.

If frost do continue, take this for a law,
The strawberries look to be covered with straw,
Laid overly trim upon crotches and bows,
And after uncovered, as weather allows.
The gilliflower also, the skilful do know,

Doth look to be covered in frost and in snow :
The knot and the border, and rosemary gay,
Do crave the like succour, for dying away.

Tusser.

DECEMBER 5TH. (*St. Nicholas's Eve.*)

St. Nicholas, besides being the patron of children, was supposed to have provided marriage portions for portionless maidens.

Saint Nicholas money used to give to maydens secretlie,
Who, that he still may use his wonted liberalitie,
The mothers all their children on the eve do cause to fast,
And, when they every one at night in senselesse sleepe are cast,
Both apples, nuttes, and peares they bring, and other things beside,
As caps, and shooes and petticotes, which secretlie they hide,
And in the morning found, they say, that this Saint Nicholas brought :
Thus tender mindes to worship Saints, and wicked things are taught.

From "The Popish Kingdom," 1750.

Barnaby Googe.

St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra, patron saint of virgins, boys, sailors, and the worshipful company of parish clerks of the city of London.

Hone.

The drooping year is in the wane,
No longer floats the thistle-down ;
The crimson heath is wan and sere ;
The sedge hangs withering by the mere,
And the broad fern is rent and brown.

The owl sits huddling by himself,
The cold has pierced his body through ;
The patient cattle hang their head ;
The deer are 'neath their winter shed ;
The ruddy squirrel's in his bed,
And each small thing within its burrow.

Mary Howitt.

DECEMBER 21ST. (*St. Thomas's Day.*)

St. Thomas grey St. Thomas grey,
The longest night and the shortest day.

Look at the weathercock on St. Thomas's Day at twelve o'clock, and see which way the wind is, and there it will stick for the next three months.

Warwickshire.

There is never a Saturday in the year
But what the sun it doth appear.

If birds pipe afore Christmas they'll greet after.

Scotland.

Mystic mistletoe flaunted,
Such as the Druids cut down with golden hatchets at Yuletide.

Longfellow.

William Stukeley, Arch Druid (1687-1765), says: "The Druids cut mistletoe off the trees with their upright hatchets of brass, called Celts, put upon the ends of their staffs, which they carried in their hands."

Mistletoe is said to be the forbidden tree in the middle of the trees of Eden.

If Christmas Day on Monday be,
A great winter that year you'll see.

What chyld on that day boorn be,
Of gret worscheyp schall he be.

MS. in Bodleian.

If that Christmas Day should fall
Upon Friday, know well all
That winter season shall be easy,
Save great winds aloft shall fly.

Easter in snow, Christmas in mud ;
Christmas in snow, Easter in mud.

Germany.

So now is come our joyful feast ;
Let every man be jolly ;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest
And every post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine ;
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

George Wither.

Carol of Queen Anne's Time, 1695.

Thrice welcome Christmas,
Which makes us good cheer,
Mince pies and plum porridge,
Good ale and strong beer,
With pig, goose and capon,
The best that may be,
So well doth the weather
And our stomachs agree.
Observe how the chimneys
Do smoke all about—
The cooks are providing
For dinner, no doubt!

Kindle the Christmas brand, and then
  Till sunrise let it burn;
Which quenched, then lay it up agen
  Till Christmas next return.

Part must be kept, wherewith to tend
  The Christmas log next year;
And when 'tis safely kept, the fiend
  Can do no mischief there.

Warwickshire.

DECEMBER 26TH. (*St. Stephen's Day.*)

Blessed be St. Stephen,
There's no fast upon his even.
Old saying.

Bishop Hall says: "On St. Stephen's Day blessings are implored upon pastures."

DECEMBER 28TH. (*Innocents' Day, or Childermas Day.*)

According to the monks, it was very unlucky to begin any work on Childermas Day, and what soever day that falls on, whether on the Monday, or Tuesday, or any other, nothing must be begun on that day through the year.
Henry Bourne, 1725.

Days lengthen a cock's stride each day after Christmas.

Know the best season to laugh and to sing,
Is winter, is summer, is autumn, is spring.
Old Song.

Hagman Heigh

Old Yorkshire custom for Hag- or Wood-man to go round to ask for money on New Year's Eve.

New Year's Eve.

Hark, the cock crows, and yon bright star
Tells us the day himself's not far ;
And see where, breaking from the night,
He gilds the western hills with light.

With him old Janus doth appear,
Peeping into the future year,
With such a look as seems to say,
The prospect is not good that way.

Charles Cotton.

If New Year's Eve night wind blows south
It betokeneth warmth and growth ;
If west, much milk, and fish in the sea ;
If north, much cold and storms there will be ;
If east, the trees will bear much fruit ;
If north-east, flee it man and brute.

The New Year, with its yet unacted history,
Claims the homage of our last departing chime ;
Then we hush ourselves in awe before the mystery,
Of the youngest and the freshest birth of Time.

The good old year is with the past ;
Oh, be the new as kind !

Pope.

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